

Differentiated Instruction Strategies and Structures

Strategies (Ministry examples)	Some Additional Strategies	Structures (Ministry Examples)
Anticipation guide Exit cards Metaphors Concept maps Venn diagram Jigsaw Think-pair-share Thinking routines Mind maps	Independent, pair, small-group, whole class groupings Varied questioning strategies Varied homework Congress Gallery walks Using taped materials Anchor activities	Tiering RAFTs Learning Contracts Learning Centers or Stations Choice Boards Cubing
Varying parallel organizers Varied texts and supplementary materials Literature circles Co-operative learning Strategic use of first languages Graphic organizers		

Student Factors	What is differentiated:			
	Content	Process	Product	Learning Environment
Readiness				
Interest				
Learning Profile				

Differentiated Instruction Structures

While there are no approaches or processes that belong to differentiated instruction only, there are a number that work especially well when differentiating because they allow you to easily vary the complexity or the form of the task for different learners. Some of the more common differentiations structures include:

Tiering – When we tier an assignment, we are creating more than one version of a task so that we can respond to students' varied levels of readiness. To create a tiered assignment, choose or create an activity that is what you would normally provide for your grade level, then create additional versions of that activity to meet the readiness needs you identified through pre-assessment. Remember that all tasks need to be respectful – engaging, interesting and challenging for all learners.

Learning Contracts – Teacher and student make a written agreement about a task to be completed. The agreement includes the learning goals and criteria for evaluation in student-friendly language, the format of the work, how it will be assessed, and organizational details such as the deadline and check in points.

Learning Centres of Stations – Centres provide different activities at various places in the classroom or school. Learning centres are not a differentiation structure if all students go to all centres and everyone does the same thing at a centre. In order to be differentiated, learning centres either need to be attended only by students who need or are interested in the work that is at them, or the work at the centre needs to be varied according to student readiness, interest, or learning preference.

RAFT is an acronym for Role, Audience, Format, Topic. These headings are written across the top of a grid and a number of options are created. Students choose an option or the teacher selects it for them. Students read across the columns to learn the role they are going to assume, the audience they will address, the format in which they will do the work, and the topic they are going to explore. For example, reading across a single row of a RAFT that is intended to have students work with a novel they have read, a student might assume the role of a book critic, for the audience of a daily newspaper. They will write their critique in the form of a column for the newspaper and will focus specifically on the topic of conflict within their novel.

RAFTs can be created to address student interests (especially in the topic and role columns), student learning preferences (in the format column) and various readiness by altering the difficulty of some of the rows or creating separate RAFT assignments for different groups of learners.

Choice Boards – A choice board is a common differentiation structure used to provide students with choice. It is sometimes called a Tic-Tac-Toe assignment because of its design.

Choice Boards can be used to help students learn (i.e., instruction and assessment) or as a way for students to demonstrate their learning (i.e., evaluation). When designing a choice board, all choices must address the same learning goal and may be based on interest (e.g., sports, music, art...) or learning preferences (e.g., learning styles or multiple intelligences). Each "choice" is assessed or evaluated against the same assessment criteria.

Cubing – Students roll a cube and do the activity on the side that comes up. We can differentiate a cube according to any of student readiness, learning preference, or interest. Cubes can be designed for specific activities such as perspectives on a novel or different aspects of a history unit. Different cubes can be given to different groups and the activities varied to support readiness or learning preference. We can make cubes and write the activities on the sides, or we can simply use a standard die accompanied by a set of index cards with the matching numbers and activities recorded on the cards.